



For immediate release:
July 8, 2004

Contact: Deborah Kelly, 302-633-2501
302-784-0490 pager

Children's Department Calling for Nominations to Recognize Dedicated Community Advocates

WILMINGTON _ In recognition of the valuable contributions made by dedicated community partners, the Delaware Children's Department is calling on the public to nominate individuals or organizations who have made exceptional efforts to benefit children who have experienced abandonment, adjudication, mental illness, neglect or substance abuse.

"We have made remarkable progress over the years transforming a 1970s style children's services system into one that meets the needs of 21st century children," said Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis. "We know we could not have made this progress alone and we want to recognize those extraordinary individuals who have joined us in making a difference in the life of a child."

Public nominations for outstanding volunteer service will be taken in the following categories: Think of the Child First Award and Shirley Cupery Community Advocacy Award.

The **Think of the Child First Award** will be presented to an individual or organization, one from each of the three counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex, who has demonstrated street level leadership and whose dedication has improved the lives of children in that community. This nominee must be a community worker (paid or volunteer) or organization.

The **Shirley Cupery Community Advocacy Award** is named for the late community activist who worked tirelessly to bring the light of social justice to every aspect of child welfare. Not only did she serve the interests of children for more than 30 years, she gave her fellow advocates the benefit of her wisdom and experience. In honor of Shirley's lifelong efforts, an award will be presented to a youth or adult who has advocated policies or programs that have made a positive impact on the well-being and safety of Delaware's children.

An individual(s) will also be honored with the Governor's Award in Children's Services. Deadline for all entries is **July 30**. To receive a nomination form, please contact 302-633-2500 or obtain an on-line copy by visiting <http://www.state.de.us/kids>.

Governor Ruth Ann Minner and Secretary DeSantis will present awards to the winners at the Children's Department 21st birthday celebration on September 13 at the Hotel duPont.

###